

why we have made it clear that NATO is not an aggressive organization trying to limit, restrict, or undermine anyone who wants to treat their neighbors with respect and work in concert the way Russia and NATO and the United States particularly are working together in Bosnia.

I'll see you in Helsinki.

**The Vice President.** Mr. President, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International] played Madeleine at the Gridiron, and I think she's still in the role. [Laughter]

**The President.** Just come get on the plane. Believe me, I missed you, and I missed him, and I'm really sorry I missed you both.

**Q.** He was fabulous.

**The President.** I ought to—

**Q.** And you did pretty good.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:49 p.m. in the Red Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov.

### Letter to the Speaker of the House on the "Working Families Flexibility Act of 1997"

March 19, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker:

America's working families find it increasingly difficult to balance the demands of work and family. Our nation's workers and their employers deserve responsible compensatory time legislation that gives working people the flexibility they need to meet their obligations at home and in the workplace, while upholding three fundamental principles: real choice for employees, real protection against employer abuse, and preservation of fair labor standards such as the 40 hour work week and the right to overtime pay.

The legislation currently pending House consideration, H.R. 1, the Working Families Flexibility Act of 1997, does not meet these principles. As a result, I strongly oppose H.R. 1 and will veto this bill if passed in its current form.

We should enact comp time legislation this year that meets the needs of working families and U.S. businesses. Last year, I proposed

employee-choice flex-time legislation and included expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) so that workers could take leave for parent-teacher conferences or attend to the routine medical needs of their families. With these objectives in mind, I encourage you to support a substitute amendment to be offered by Representative George Miller. Unlike H.R. 1, the Miller amendment allows comp time without endangering fair labor standards, and without burdening business with greater costs or risks.

It is time for us to work together to give America's working families the help they need to succeed in an increasingly demanding environment. Although I am prepared to support and sign a responsible comp time bill, I intend to veto any legislation that fails to guarantee real choice for employees, real protection against employer abuse, and preservation of fair labor standards such as the 40 hour work week and the right to overtime pay. To that end, I hope that you can support the Miller amendment—a good step toward responsible comp time reform.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

### Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Environmental Quality

March 19, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress the Twenty-fifth Annual Report on Environmental Quality.

As a nation, the most important thing we can do as we move into the 21st century is to give all our children the chance to live up to their God-given potential and live out their dreams. In order to do that, we must offer more opportunity and demand more responsibility from all our citizens. We must help young people get the education and training they need, make our streets safer from crime, help Americans succeed at home and at work, protect our environment for generations to come, and ensure that America remains the strongest force for peace and freedom in the world. Most of all, we must